

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 PANAMA 01216 01 OF 03 182204Z  
ACTION A-01

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 H-03 NSC-06 NSCE-00 SS-07 SSO-00 CCO-00  
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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA  
TO AMEMBASSY MEXICO NIACT IMMEDIATE  
INFO USIA WASHDC  
SECSTATE WASHDC 779

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 3 PANAMA 1216

USIAC

MEXICO FOR CODEL SLACK

EO 11652: N/A  
SUBJECT: CODEL SLACK PRESS CONFERENCE IN PANAMA, FEBRUARY 18.

HEREWITH TRANSCRIPT OF CODEL SLACK PANAMA PRESS CONFERENCE

REP. SLACK (OPENING STATEMENT)  
THANK YOU VERY MUCH. THE CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION VISITING PANAMA  
IS COMPRISED OF MEMBERS OF CERTAIN AUTHORIZATION COMMITTEES AS  
WELL OF THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED STATES HOUSE  
OF REPRESENTATIVES, WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY WILL BE TO INITIATE  
LEGISLATION WITH REGARD TO CERTAIN AREAS OF A FINALIZED TREATY  
IN WHICH NEGOTIATIONS ARE PRESENTLY UNDERWAY. THE PROCEDURE FOR  
SUCH LEGISLATION WILL BE DETERMINED BY THE TREATY PACKAGE AS  
PRESENTED IN ITS FINAL FORM.

OUR TRIP IS BASICALLY A FACT FINDING MISSION; WE HAVE HEARD BOTH  
SIDES OF THE TREATY ISSUE. WE SHALL ASSEMBLE THE FACTS AS WE  
SEE THEM, SHARE THOSE FACTS WITH OUR COLLEAGUES IN WASHINGTON,  
ALL OF WHICH WILL BETTER QUALIFY THE HOUSE MEMBERSHIP TO MAKE A  
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PAGE 02 PANAMA 01216 01 OF 03 182204Z

FAIR JUDGEMENT ON THIS IMPORTANT BUT HIGHLY CONTROVERSIAL  
MATTER.

ARE THERE ANY MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION WHO WOULD CARE TO  
SUPPLEMENT THE STATEMENT I JUST MADE? IF NOT, LADIES AND  
GENTLEMEN, WE SHALL PROCEED WITH THE QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD.

Q. CONGRESSWOMAN BURKE, HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE LAST FEW DAYS YOU HAVE SPENT IN PANAMA? WHAT WERE YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT YOUR TRIP HERE AND WHAT HAVE YOU FOUND OUT?

A. (REP. BURKE) I HAVE FELT THAT THE PANAMANIAN PEOPLE WERE VERY FRIENDLY TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. I HAVE ALSO FELT THAT THERE ARE MANY, MANY ISSUES AND MANY VIEWS THAT HAVE BEEN EXPRESSED. AFTER TALKING WITH THE NEGOTIATORS I THINK THERE ARE A FEW THINGS THAT SHOULD BE MADE CLEAR. THE NEGOTIATORS ARE CERTAINLY COMMITTED TO MAINTAIN THE SECURITY OF THE U.S. AND THE DECISIONS THAT THEY WOULD MAKE WILL BE MADE WITH THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF OF THE UNITED STATES, AND WHILE THERE IS EVERY ATTEMPT TO ARRIVE AT AN EARLY TREATY, EVERY ATTEMPT, I'M ALSO CONVINCED, WILL BE MADE TO MAKE SURE THAT THE U.S. IS ADEQUATELY PROTECTED, AND THE INTEREST OF THE U.S. IS PRESERVED.

Q. MRS. BURKE, IN TERMS OF GUARANTEEING THAT THOSE SECURITY INTERESTS ARE MAINTAINED FOR THE U.S., HOW IMPORTANT DO YOU THINK IT IS THAT THE U.S. MAINTAIN A PHYSICAL PRESENCE IN TERMS OF MILITARY PRESENCE HERE IN WHAT IS NOW THE ZONE AFTER THE EXPIRATION OF THE TREATY?

A. (REP. BURKE) I THINK IT IS VERY NECESSARY FOR US TO HAVE AT LEAST SOME PRESENCE HERE, BUT WE HAVE TO RECOGNIZE WE ARE TALKING ABOUT 25 YEARS HENCE. WHAT WAS OUR MILITARY NEED 25 YEARS AGO IS CONSIDERABLY DIFFERENT THAN WHAT OUR NEED WILL BE 25 YEARS FROM NOW. I THINK IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT WE ALLOW FLEXIBILITY SO THAT THERE IS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 PANAMA 01216 01 OF 03 182204Z

EVERY POSSIBILITY TO MAINTAIN WHATEVER PRESENCE IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY FOR OUR SECURITY. I PERSONALLY WOULD HOPE IT WOULD BE BASED UPON THE MAINTENANCE OF OTHER MILITARY PRESENCE THROUGHOUT THE REST OF THE WORLD AND ON THE SAME BASIS.

Q. DOES YOUR PRESENCE HERE MEAN THAT THERE WILL BE ANOTHER TREATY THIS YEAR WITH PANAMA?

A. (REP. BURKE) I AM AFRAID I DIDN'T QUITE UNDERSTAND THAT THERE WILL BE ANOTHER TREATY...NO, THIS YEAR. MY UNDERSTANDING IS THAT THE NEGOTIATORS HAVE BEEN DIRECTED TO MAKE EVERY ATTEMPT TO ARRIVE AT A TREATY DURING THIS YEAR.

(REP. SMITH) I JUST WANT TO SAY THAT I GET THE IMPRESSION MYSELF THAT THE PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT DOES NOT WANT TO CONCLUDE AN AGREEMENT. I THINK FIRST THING THEY WOULD LIKE TO HAVE WOULD BE THE UNITED STATES TO NOT NEGOTIATE BUT SINCE

WE ARE NOT TAKING THAT POSITION THEN THEY WOULD LIKE TO  
CONTINUE TO REFUSE REASONABLE OFFERS AND TO PRESENT  
UNREASONABLE COUNTER DEMANDS. I THINK IT'S IN THEIR  
INTEREST NOT TO CONCLUDE AN AGREEMENT.

Q. MR. SMITH, COULD YOU REPEAT YOUR STATEMENT PLEASE,  
BECAUSE YOU DID NOT TRANSLATE IT ALL AND IT IS VERY  
IMPORTANT WHAT YOU SAID. YOU ADDED AFTER THAT THE  
PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT DOES NOT WANT TO COMPLETE A  
TREATY, WHY DO YOU THINK IT DOES NOT?

A. (REP. SMITH) I JUST GET THE DISTINCT IMPRESSION  
THAT THEY DON'T WANT TO. I DON'T KNOW ALL THE REASONS.

Q. YOU SAID THAT THEY REFUSED REASONABLE OFFERS, YOU  
MEAN THAT THERE IS NO FLEXIBILITY ON THE PART OF THE  
PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT?  
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 04 PANAMA 01216 01 OF 03 182204Z

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PAGE 01 PANAMA 01216 02 OF 03 182212Z  
ACTION A-01

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 H-03 NSC-06 NSCE-00 SS-07 SSO-00  
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SECSTATE WASHDC 0780

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 3 PANAMA 1216

A. (REP. SMITH) I JUST GET THE IMPRESSION THAT AS  
LONG AS THE U.S. IS NEGOTIATING AND NOT REFUSING TO NOT  
NEGOTIATING, (SIC))TO NEGOTIATE, THAT THEY'RE GOING TO  
PROBABLY REFUSE REASONABLE OFFERS AND MAKE UNREASONABLE  
COUNTER DEMANDS BECAUSE I GET THE IMPRESSION SINCE I

HAVE BEEN HERE THAT THEY DON'T REALLY WANT TO CONCLUDE A TREATY.

Q. DO THE OTHER MEMBERS SHARE YOUR OPINION?

A. (REP. DORNAN) I WILL ANSWER THAT. CONGRESSMAN DORNAN FROM CALIFORNIA. PART OF THE DIFFICULTY OF CONCLUDING A TREATY WITH A DICTATORSHIP IS THAT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE FEEL THAT THEY ARE DEALING WITH ONE MAN. I FOUND THAT PRESIDENT AN ARTICULATE AND DELIGHTFUL MAN BUT I DO NOT THINK HE HAS ANY POWER IN THE GOVERNMENT AT ALL. AND WHENEVER YOU DEAL WITH A COUNTRY THAT HAS A ONE-MAN, STRONG MAN TYPE OF GOVERNMENT, YOU ALWAYS FEEL THAT YOUR TREATY IS ONLY AS STRONG AS THE DECISION OF ONE BRAIN, ONE HUMAN BEING. THIS SITUATION MIGHT CHANGE 23 YEARS FROM NOW BUT THEN AGAIN IT MIGHT NOT. SO SIMPLY AGAIN, IT IS VERY DIFFICULT FOR A DEMOCRATIC NATION TO CONCLUDE A TREATY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 PANAMA 01216 02 OF 03 182212Z

WITH ONE HUMAN BEING, IN A ONE-MAN, STRONG MAN DICTATORSHIP GOVERNMENT, AND THAT'S THE STRONGEST NEGATIVE FEELING THAT I TAKE AWAY FROM THE GREAT NATION OF PANAMA.

Q. ALL THESE TALKS COULD BE CALLED A FASSE THEN?

A. (REP. SMITH) I THINK THE U.S. IS PROCEEDING IN GOOD FAITH. I GET THE IMPRESSION THAT THERE IS NOT A DESIRE ON THE PART OF THE PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT TO CONCLUDE THE TALKS.

Q. DO YOU INTEND TO INITIATE LEGISLATION TO BLOCK THE APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE NEGOTIATIONS LIKE IT WAS TRIED TO DO LAST YEAR?

A. (REP. SMITH) WELL, MOST OF US WHO WERE THERE LAST YEAR OPPOSED BLOCKING THE NEGOTIATIONS; WE WERE FOR CONTINUING NEGOTIATIONS AND CONTINUING TO TALK. I DO THINK HOWEVER, THAT IT IS A GOOD TIME TO PROCEED TO OFFER SOME OTHER GOVERNMENT AN OPPORTUNITY TO ENTER INTO A PARTNERSHIP OF SOME KIND TO BUILD ANOTHER CANAL. ONE THAT WOULD BE MUCH MORE EFFICIENT THAN THIS ONE. (REP. SLACK). I THINK I SHOULD SAY AT THIS POINT THAT THESE VIEWS ARE NOT THE COLLECTIVE VIEWS OF THE DELEGATION. THESE ARE INDIVIDUALS VIEWS EXPRESSED BY EACH MEMBER.

Q.- HOW WOULD YOU PRESENT YOUR ANALYSIS OF THE PANAMA-NIAN SITUATION ONCE YOU HAVE RETURNED TO THE U.S.?

A.- (REP SLACK). AS I SAID IN MY OPENING STATEMENT,  
WE HAVE HEARD BOTH SIDES OF THIS ISSUE. WE WILL ASSEMBLE  
THE FACTS; FROM THOSE FACTS WE WILL PUBLISH A REPORT,  
WHICH REPORT WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE TO ALL MEMBERS OF  
THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IN ORDER  
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PAGE 03 PANAMA 01216 02 OF 03 182212Z

THAT THEY MAY TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OUR VISIT HERE TO  
ASSIST THEM IN MAKING A JUDGEMENT ON THIS MATTER.

Q.- COULD YOU PLEASE EXPLAIN, MESSRS. SMITH AND DORNAN,  
TO WHICH SECTOR OF PUBLIC OPINION DO YOU BELONG TO IN  
THE UNITED STATES; THE WAR SECTOR OR THE LIBERAL SECTOR?

A.- WHICH SECTOR?

(PRESS OFFICER) PARDON ME. I WOULD LIKE TO EXPLAIN HE WANTS TO  
FIND OUT IF YOU BELONG TO THE WARMONGERING SECTION OR  
THE LIBERAL SECTION.

A.- (MR. SMITH). I DON'T THINK YOU CAN DESCRIBE ME  
AS LIBERAL OR CONSERVATIVE EITHER ONE. I TRY TO BE  
OBJECTIVE.

Q.- AS YOU SAID THAT THE WORDS WE HAVE HEARD HERE ARE  
NOT THE OPINION OF THE GROUP AS A WHOLE BUT INDIVIDUAL  
OPINIONS, COULD YOU PLEASE EXPLAIN YOUR POSITION? I  
AM SPECIFICALLY REFERRING TO THE IMPOSSIBILITY OR THE  
PROBLEM OF NEGOTIATING WITH PANAMA GIVEN THE KIND OF  
GOVERNMENT IT HAS AND THE IMPRESSION THAT YOU EXPRESS-  
ED THAT PANAMA DOES NOT WANT TO NEGOTIATE.

A.- (HON. SMITH). I THINK FIRST OF ALL THAT EVERY  
INDIVIDUAL HERE IS ELECTED BY HALF A MILLION  
CONSTITUENTS, AND WE ARE EACH INDIVIDUALS; NO ONE HAS  
ANY AUTHORITY OVER ANYBODY ELSE. LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,  
MR. DORNAN MAY WANT TO RESPOND BECAUSE THE QUESTION WAS  
DIRECTED TO HIM AND AFTER THAT WE WILL HAVE ONE MORE  
QUESTION.

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PAGE 01 PANAMA 01216 03 OF 03 182220Z  
ACTION A-01

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 H-03 NSC-06 NSCE-00 SS-07 SSO-00  
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INFO USIA WASHDC  
SECSTATE WASHDC 0781

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 3 OF 3 PANAMA 1216

(MR. DORNAN). LET ME ANSWER THE LABELING QUESTION.  
IT SEEMS TO BE NOT ONLY AN AMERICAN OBSESSION, BUT  
AN INTERNATIONAL ONE TO LABEL PEOPLE. LET ME JUST  
BRIEFLY ANSWER THE QUESTION ABOUT WHAT'S THE PHILOSOPHY  
I HAVE. I AM LIBERAL ON SOME ISSUES, I MARCHED WITH  
DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, I AM LIBERAL ON CIVIL RIGHTS  
AND HUMAN RIGHTS. I SUPPORT MY PRESIDENT TODAY FOR  
EXAMPLE ON HIS STATEMENTS AND CONTACTS WITH ANDRES  
SAHKAROV OF THE SOVIET UNION. I AM CONSERVATIVE ON  
FISCAL MATTER; HOW YOU PAY FOR THINGS, WHETHER THE  
CANAL IS RUN EFFICIENTLY, ON STRATEGIC MATTERS, THE  
WORLD BALANCE OF POWER. I BELIEVE AND I RE-STATE THIS,  
THAT IT IS VERY DIFFICULT FOR A DEMOCRACY WHERE A  
PRESIDENT, THROUGH HIS STATE DEPARTMENT AND THROUGH HIS  
NEGOTIATION TEAM MAY MAKE ONE MOVE BUT WHERE IT MUST  
BE APPROVED BY THE AMERICAN PEOPLE THROUGH THEIR ELECTIVE  
REPRESENTATIVE AND SENATE, AND IN THE CASE OF PANAMA CANAL  
THE HOUSE IS ALSO INVOLVED BECAUSE IT INVOLVES THE ZONE,  
TREATIES, LAND AND APPROPRIATIONS, AND I BELIEVE THERE IS  
HIGHLY MISTAKEN IMPRESSION HERE THAT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE  
THROUGH THEIR CONGRESS ARE NOT GOING TO BE INVOLVED IN THIS  
PROCESS AND I WAS QUITE HAPPY TO FIND THAT THE EXCELLENT  
AMERICAN AMBASSADORS ON THE SCENE HERE, BOTH AMBASSADOR  
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PAGE 02 PANAMA 01216 03 OF 03 182220Z

TAYLOR (SIC) AND THE TWO NEGOTIATING AMBASSADORS, LINOWITZ AND  
BUNKER ARE NOW TOTALLY AWARE THAT THE NEGOTIATING  
PROCESS IS EVERY BIT AS IMPORTANT IN THE CONGRESS OF THE  
U.S. AS IT IS OUT ON CONTADORA ISLAND AND THERE IS A  
MISTAKEN IMPRESSION HERE GIVEN I THINK BY GENERAL TORRIJOS  
THAT THE CONGRESS IS NOT INVOLVED IN THIS PROCESS. AND I  
FOUND IT VERY SAD THE FOREIGN MINISTER DID NOT MEET WITH  
US YESTERDAY MORNING OR THAT THE GENERAL HIMSELF DID NOT  
SEE FIT TO MEET WITH AN IMPORTANT DELEGATION OF AMERICAN

CONGRESSMEN. THE NEGOTIATIONS ARE ONLY PARTLY ACCOMPLISHED HERE IN PANAMA, I THINK A GREATER PORTION IS ACCOMPLISHED IN THE CONGRESS OF THE US WHERE THE PEOPLE SPEAK THROUGH THEIR ELECTIVE REPRESENTATIVE, THE PEOPLE OF THE U.S.

Q.- I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A QUESTION TO MR. STUMP. IT WAS PUBLISHED YESTERDAY THAT YOU HAVE MADE A STATEMENT THAT THE NEW TREATY WAS A GIVEAWAY TO PANAMA. I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW THE GROUNDS YOU HAD TO MAKE SUCH A STATEMENT, SIR.

A.- (REP. STUMP). WHAT I TRIED TO SAY WAS THAT I DON'T THINK THE AMERICAN PUBLIC REALIZES THE TERMS OF THE TREATY. I THINK IN THEIR MIND WE ARE TALKING ABOUT A PARTNERSHIP OR A NEW TREATY NOT ONE THAT IS GOING TO END IN 25 YEARS AND AT THAT TIME WE ARE TO WALK AWAY AND APPARENTLY LEAVE THIS.

(REP. SLACK). MR. METCALFE WOULD LIKE TO MAKE AN OBSERVATION.

(MR. METCALFE). AS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PANAMA SUBCOMMITTEE, I AM VERY DELIGHTED TO HAVE BEEN EXTENDED THE COURTESY AND THE INVITATION BY CHAIRMAN JOHN SLACK TO MAKE THIS TRIP. MY PURPOSE IN ACCEPTING THE INVITATION WAS TO GET A FIRST-HAND AND UP-TO-DATE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 PANAMA 01216 03 OF 03 182220Z

INFORMATION. TO THAT END, I FEEL THAT THE TRIP HAS BEEN EXTREMELY SUCCESSFUL AND THAT WE HAVE A BETTER GRASP ON THE CONTROVERSIAL SITUATION. THE COMMITTEE ON PANAMA IS NOW PLANNING TO BRING ITS FULL COMMITTEE DOWN AS WE NORMALLY DO EVERY YEAR, TO HOLD HEARINGS, BUT WE NOW HAVE A BASIS FOR THEM. I WOULD LIKE TO SAY THAT MY POSITION IS BEING ONE OF TRYING VERY HARD TO BE OBJECTIVE, TO BRING ABOUT A PEACEFUL AND AMICABLE TREATY ARRANGEMENT. I STILL HOLD FAST TO THAT IDEA, I AM STILL HOPEFUL THAT WE CAN BECAUSE IT'S IN THE BEST INTEREST OF NOT ONLY THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN U.S. AND PANAMA BUT THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE U.S. AND PANAMA AND WHAT IS RIGHT AND JUST AND HOPEFULLY THAT WE CAN ARRIVE AT SOME AGREEMENT IN WHICH ALL OF OUR INTERESTS WILL BE PROTECTED AND AT THE SAME TIME WE WILL ADD DIGNITY TO THE PEOPLE OF PANAMA.

(REP. SLACK). THANK YOU VERY MUCH LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. ROCKWEILER

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## Message Attributes

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